

OHS Proactive Initiative Municipal Districts, Towns, and Villages

*What does this mean for
you?*

AMHSA – Lunch and Learn

Friday, May 9th, 2025



WCB Industry Codes

The following WCB industry codes will be the focus of this initiative:

- Towns - 95101
- Villages - 95102
- Municipal Districts (M.D.) – 95100

This initiative will **only** include the specified industry codes therefore the following will not be included:

- Cities, Reserves, and Metis settlements
- Mayor and councilors
- School board(s)

Objectives

The objective of this proactive initiative is to:

- Enforce provincial legislation through inspections.
- Ensure employers have identified and controlled industry hazards and met health and safety requirements.
- Ensure employers have trained and competent workers.

Rationale

- Each year, OHS officers conduct proactive inspections to monitor compliance with OHS legislation.
- A specific employer, sector, or industry may be selected due to:
 - High injury and illness rates
 - Emerging trends
 - Absence of data
- Proactive inspections help work site parties to identify health and safety hazards and measures to mitigate those hazards.

Initiative Priorities

The M.D., towns and villages initiative priorities have been defined as follows:

- Psychosocial hazards.
- Tasks associated with caught, contact or struck with object, tool, equipment, falls and or jumps.
- OHS law provisions associated with the Internal responsibility system (IRS).

Internal Responsibility System

KEY INFORMATION

- Everyone in the workplace shares responsibility for health and safety.
- As authority and control increase, so do health and safety responsibilities.

The *OHS Act* defines roles and responsibilities of work site parties (including employers, supervisors, workers, suppliers, service providers, contracting employers, owners, prime contractors and temporary staffing agencies).



Occupational health and safety and the internal responsibility system

OHS information for all Alberta work site parties

This bulletin gives basic information about the internal responsibility system that is the basis of Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, Regulation and Code.

KEY INFORMATION

- Everyone in the workplace shares responsibility for health and safety.
- As authority and control increase, so do health and safety responsibilities.

workplace health and safety, such as joint health and safety committees and health and safety representatives. These legislated functions serve as an internal observer of OHS issues and a forum for shared problem solving.

The OHS Act defines roles and responsibilities of work site parties (including employers, supervisors, workers, suppliers, service providers, contracting employers, owners, prime contractors and temporary staffing agencies).



What is an internal responsibility system?

An internal responsibility system is a way of sharing responsibility for health and safety between everyone in the workplace. Responsibility is shared according to each person's legal obligations, which are often based upon that person's authority and control at the work site.

Because control and authority may not be shared equally at workplaces, responsibilities for health and safety may not be shared equally.

In an internal responsibility system, employers are usually seen as having the most responsibilities, but all work site parties, including workers, have responsibilities.

Internal responsibility systems and legislation

In Canada, OHS legislation relies on the foundation of the internal responsibility system.

In some jurisdictions, such as Nova Scotia and Ontario, the internal responsibility system is written into or directly referenced in OHS legislation.

In other jurisdictions, including Alberta, the internal responsibility system is not included explicitly in legislation, but is a defining concept – especially in regards to legislated roles and responsibilities for work site parties.

Internal responsibility systems are also evident in Canadian legislation through requirements for worker participation in

For more information on legislated health and safety roles and responsibilities in Alberta, review the bulletin: [Guide to OHS: employers](#), [supervisors](#) and [workers](#).



The internal responsibility system in action

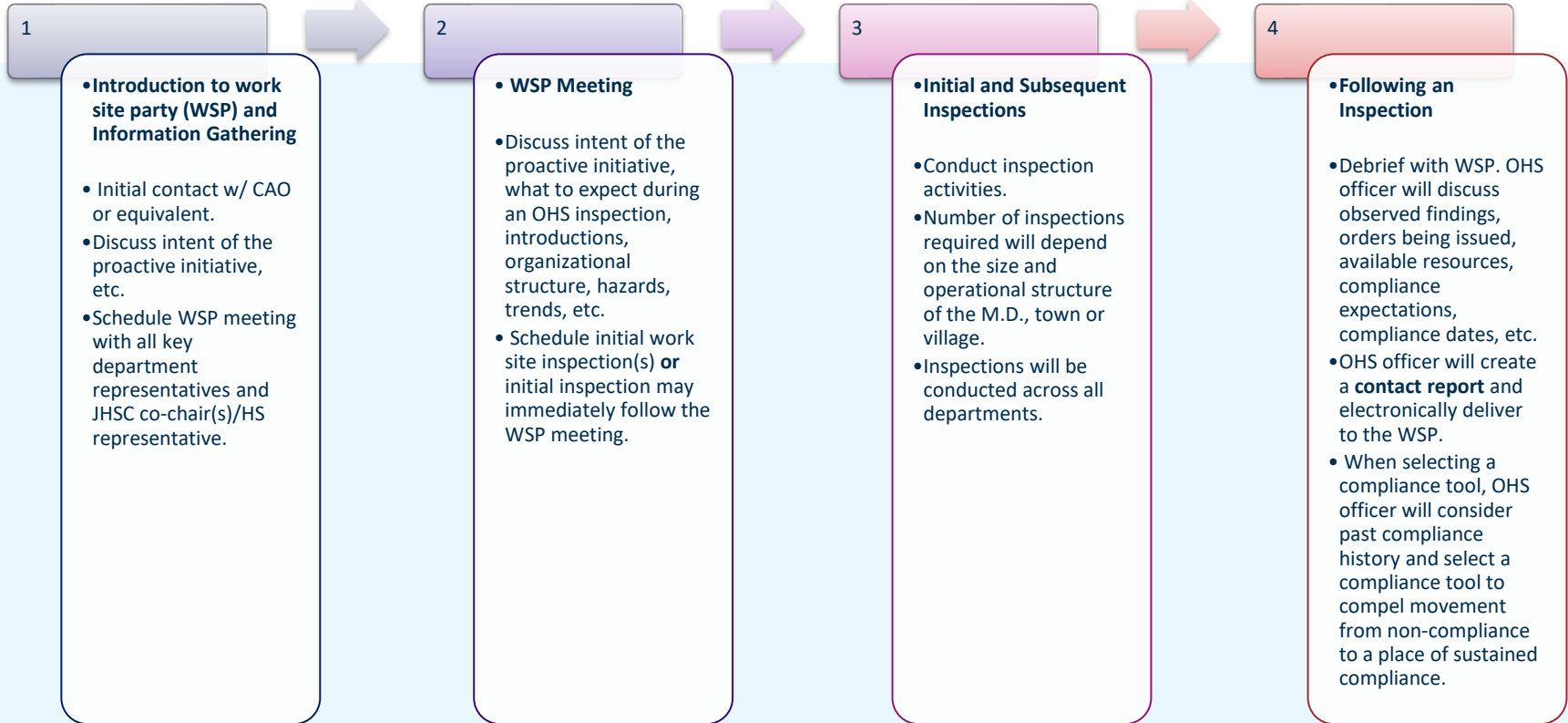
An internal responsibility system is working if everyone participates in work site health and safety, health and safety is integrated into all work site activities, and these efforts are effective in identifying ways to prevent injury and illness and promote worker health.

The internal responsibility system also needs to be responsive in order to be effective. When a problem is identified, there has to be a timely response within the organization. This promotes self-reliance – that is, the internal system can identify and address its own issues.

Here are some examples of the internal responsibility system in action.

- A worker wiping up someone else's spill.
- A supervisor checking, in routine daily activities, whether workers are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment – and making sure they do so, if they were not.
- An employer keeping records of worker certifications and training, and checking regularly to make sure they are current.

M.D., Towns and Villages - Compliance and Inspection Approach



Role and Duties of Alberta OHS Officers

Role and duties of Alberta OHS officers Information for work site parties

This bulletin gives an overview of how occupational health and safety (OHS) officers monitor and enforce compliance with OHS laws in Alberta.

KEY INFORMATION

- OHS officers play an important role in keeping Alberta's work sites safe and healthy.
- OHS officers can:
 - Enter work sites to conduct an inspection or investigate an incident.
 - Take actions to ensure work site parties comply with OHS laws.

Monitoring and enforcing

Alberta OHS laws establish rules and requirements that employers, workers and other work site parties must follow to keep work sites healthy and safe.

OHS officers have authority to monitor and enforce the legislation in a number of ways, including:

- Conducting inspections and investigations.
- Issuing orders.
- Writing tickets.
- Issuing administrative penalties.

Inspection and investigation authorities

The OHS Act gives OHS officers their authority to conduct inspections and investigations.

Section 34 establishes inspection authorities. During an inspection, officers may:

- Enter a work site at any reasonable time.
- Require the production of any documents relating to health and safety. The officer can:
 - Examine these, make copies or temporarily remove them to make copies.
 - Use any of the employer's devices or systems, if needed, to examine the documents.
- Require reasonable assistance, including access to electronic information.

- Inspect, seize or take samples of materials, products or equipment.
 - This can include requiring dismantling or testing, if needed.
 - Bring along specialized equipment and technical experts.
 - Do tests and take photographs, measurements or recordings.
 - Require demonstrations of how equipment or machinery works.
 - Interview and take statements from persons who have information related to the health and safety of workers.
- If an injury or incident occurs at a work site, or an illness occurs in relation to a work site, section 36 of the act states that officers may:

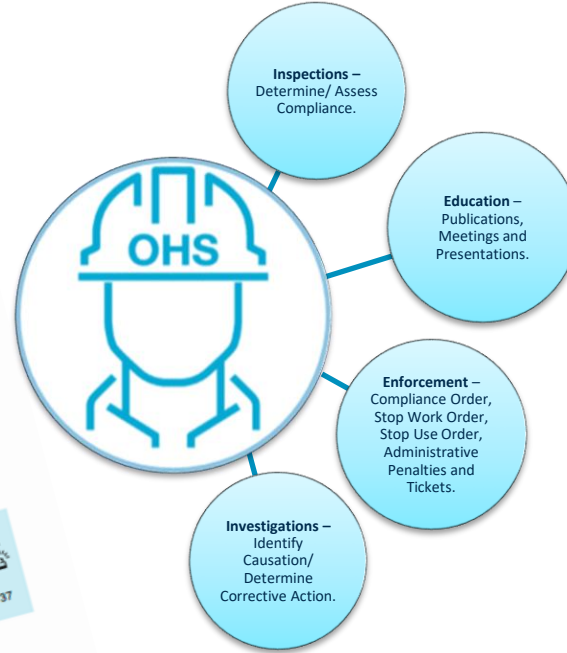
- Investigate the injury, illness or incident.
- Attend the scene and make inquiries to determine cause and circumstances.
- Enter any relevant place or area at a work site.
- Require the production of information or seize documentation.
- Exercise any inspection authority.

The act gives officers authority to require proof of identity from any person at a work site. This proof has to be satisfactory to the officer. Officers may also require employers to identify all workers and supervisors employed by the employer.

Under Part 1 of the OHS Act, work site parties must cooperate with OHS officers. The law also prohibits anyone from interfering with or hindering an OHS officer.

No person shall interfere with or in any manner hinder an officer or a police officer who is exercising powers or performing duties or functions under this Act.

-OHS Act, s. 37



What to Expect in an OHS Inspection

What to expect in an OHS inspection

Information for employers

This bulletin explains what you – as an employer – can expect when Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) carries out an inspection at your work site.

A [companion bulletin](#) gives similar information with a worker focus. The [Role and duties of Alberta OHS officers](#) bulletin gives more information about the legal inspection authority of OHS.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Alberta OHS Act gives OHS officers authority to inspect work sites to determine compliance with OHS laws.
- OHS inspections are not the same as the work site inspections you and your workers carry out.
- As an employer, you must cooperate with officers carrying out OHS inspections.

OHS inspections

Why and when

OHS officers may carry out inspections, to determine compliance with OHS laws. Common reasons for an inspection include:

- Someone has contacted OHS with a concern.
- An officer is following up on a non-compliance.
- There was a work site incident.
- There's a [proactive inspection program](#) that relates to the type of work you do.

OHS work site inspections must be conducted during normal business hours. They are often unannounced. (The officer won't book them in advance.)

Officers don't need a warrant to inspect a work site. If the work site is in a private dwelling, officers are required to obtain consent from the owner or occupant before entering. If consent is not given, a judge can issue a warrant.

No person shall interfere with or in any manner hinder an officer or a police officer who is exercising powers or performing duties or functions under this Act.



-OHS Act, s. 37

The OHS Act gives OHS officers specific powers. These are also called authorities. Many of an officer's inspection authorities are found in sections 34 and 35 of the OHS Act.

Arriving on site

When an officer arrives on site, they will identify themselves and explain the reason for the inspection. OHS officer identification includes their government-issued ID and business cards.

Before they start a site walk-through, officers gather information. This helps make the inspection safe and effective. As standard practice, an officer:

- Determines the legal identity of work site parties. To do this, the officer can require corporate, business or individual identification. The officer determines what they need.
- Asks questions to help understand the workplace, such as:
 - What type of work do you do?
 - How many workers and/or shifts are there?
 - What are the work site hazards?
 - What are your health and safety procedures?
- Arranges for an employer representative to accompany them on the inspection. The employer representative is the person in control of the site.

OHS officers may also ask a joint health and safety committee (HSC) member, their designate or a health and safety (HS) representative to accompany them on the inspection. They have authority to do this under section 15 of the OHS Act.

If there is no HSC or HS representative, the officer can ask another worker to join the inspection.

Site walk-through

During the site walk-through, officers use their legal authorities to check for compliance. Some examples of the authorities OHS officers use in an inspection include:

- Talking with workers or other work site parties.
- Taking photos, measurements or recordings.

What to expect in an OHS inspection

Information for workers

This bulletin explains what you – as a worker – can expect when Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) carries out an inspection at your work site.

A [companion bulletin](#) gives similar information with an employer focus. The [Role and duties of Alberta OHS officers](#) bulletin gives more information about the legal inspection authority of OHS.

KEY INFORMATION

- The Alberta OHS Act gives OHS officers authority to inspect work sites to monitor compliance with OHS laws.
- OHS inspections are not the same as the work site inspections or incident investigations your employer carries out.
- As a worker, you must cooperate with officers carrying out OHS inspections.

OHS inspections

Why and when

OHS officers have a duty to carry out inspections, in order to assess compliance with OHS laws. Common reasons for an inspection include:

- Someone has contacted OHS with a concern.
- An officer is following up on a non-compliance.
- There was a work site incident.
- There's a [proactive inspection program](#) that relates to the type of work you do.

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The inspection process

The person in control of a work site – the prime contractor, employer or their designate – is usually an OHS officer's main contact when they arrive on site and during their inspection. However, worker participation in OHS inspections is an important part of the process.

Standard practice is for an officer to arrange for an employer representative to accompany them on the inspection walk-through.

OHS officers may also ask a joint health and safety committee (HSC) member, their designate or a health and safety (HS) representative to accompany them. They have authority to do this under section 15 of the OHS Act.

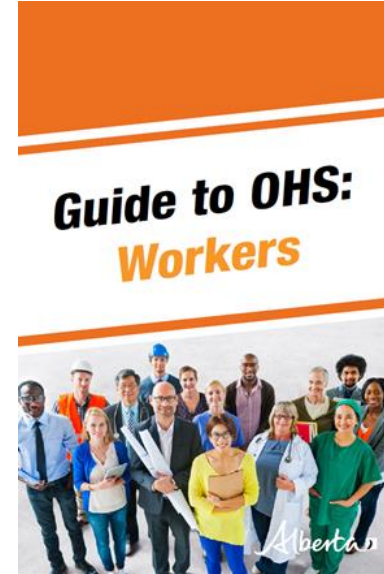
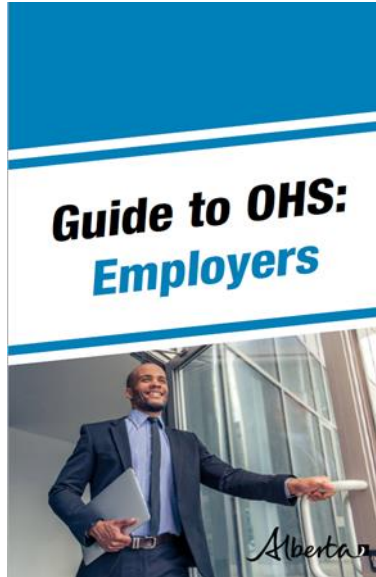
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During a walk-through, officers use their legal authorities to check for compliance. Some examples of the authorities OHS officers use in an inspection include:

- Talking with workers or other work site parties.
- Taking photos, measurements and recordings.
- Inspecting equipment, taking samples of materials or conducting tests.
- Bringing in or consulting with technical experts.
- Requiring assistance (including to access computers or to inspect equipment) or a demonstration (for example, of machinery or equipment).
- Reviewing training records, policies, procedures or other documents (printed copy or electronic).
- Obtaining statements from workers or other work site parties.

In talking with you as a worker, officers may ask you questions – for instance, to see your training records or

Know your Obligations



OHS Resources

- Alberta OHS Website

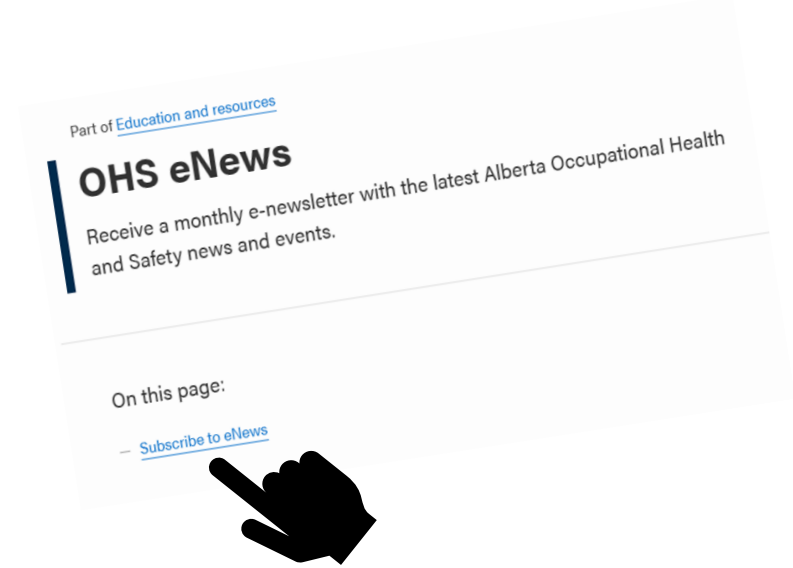
<https://www.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety>

- Alberta OHS Resource Portal

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/>

- OHS eNews

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/en001>



Thank-you
